



**MINUTES**  
**APRIL 28, 2015**  
**LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**HISTORIC COURTHOUSE – PUBLIC SQUARE**  
**COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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**ATTENDANCE:** COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT- County Council Chairman Joe Wood and Vice Chairman Tollison; County Council Members: Diane Anderson, Stewart Jones, Ted Nash and David Pitts.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT** – Councilman Edward McDaniel (deceased).

**COUNTY STAFF:** Laurens County Clerk to Council Betty Walsh and Laurens County Attorney, Sandy Cruickshanks.

**DEPARTMENT HEADS PRESENT:** Laurens County Human Resources Manager, Debi Parker; Laurens County Communications Director, Joey Avery; Laurens County Sheriff, Ricky Chastain; Laurens County Public Works Director Rob Russian, Captain Tyson, Detention Center Administrator; Laurens County Emergency Medical Services, Chad Burrell, Director; Laurens County Coroner, Nick Nichols; Laurens County Finance, Lisa Kirk, Director;

**PRESS:** Vic McDonald, *The Clinton Chronicle*; Iva Cadmus, *WLBG Radio* Jennifer Brown, *GoLaurens.com* and Corey Engle, *The Laurens County Advertiser*.

**SCHEDULED MEETING AGENDA ITEMS** - 1.) Call to Order – Chairman Wood; 2.) Invocation – Vice Chairman Tollison; 3.) Pledge of Allegiance (led by the Laurens County Clemson Extension 4H Club; 4.) Approval of Agenda, April 28, 2015; 5.) Approval of Minutes – April 14, 2015; 6.) Laurens County Beckman Center - Board Members, Dr. Byron Parker, Dr. Camilla Bravo, Ms. Amanda Suarez and Dr. Jerman Disasa; 7.) Laurens County Detention Center, Major Tyson, Jail Administrator; 8.) Resolution #2015-10, "Emergency Medical Services Week"; 9.) Resolution #2015-11, "Peace Officers Memorial Month"; 10.) Resolution #2015-12, "A Resolution By Laurens County Council Acknowledging The Merger Of Unifor Aluminum Forgings LLC and Unifor Buildings, LLC Into Brawo USA, Incorporated, Formerly Known As Unifor Brass forgings, Incorporated"; 11.) Appointment(s), Laurens County Water / Sewer Commission; 12.) First Reading, Ordinance #786, "An Ordinance to Amend and Rescind Ordinance #347 And Other Matters Appertaining Thereto"; 13.) First Reading, Ordinance #789, "An Ordinance To Amend And Modify Laurens County Ordinance #625 Regarding The Distribution Of Fees-In-Lieu-Of-Tax Received, Retained And Distributed By Laurens County, South Carolina, Including, But Not Limited To Any Joint County Industrial And Business Park Agreements And Amendments Thereto And Other Matters Related Thereto"; 14.) Administrative Report, Ernie Segars, County Administrator; 15.) Public Comments; 16.) Comments from Council Members; 17.) Adjournment; 18.) *Following the regular session of Council, Council will move into Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Budget discussion.*

**MEETING NOTIFICATION** - The County Council Members, Department Heads, requesting general public and the Press were informed of the meeting in a timely manner.

**CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Wood called the meeting to order and invited all to stand for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Chairman Tollison provided the invocation. The Laurens County 4H Club led everyone with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Wood informed all that Administrator Segars would be absent as he is now a proud grandfather of a seven pound seven ounce (7 lb.7 oz. grandson).

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Chairman Wood called for approval of the agenda with any additions.

Requested Agenda Item: Councilwoman Anderson requested an Executive Session towards a matter of concern.

COUNCILMAN NASH made the MOTION to approve the agenda as presented and with the additions; COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – COUNCILMAN JONES made the MOTION to approve the minutes from the April 14, 2015 regular session of Council. COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

**LAURENS COUNTY BECKMAN CENTER – BOARD MEMBERS** – Beckman Center Board Members Dr. Byron Parker, Dr. Camilla Bravo, Ms. Amanda Suarez and Dr. Jerman Disasa appeared before Council to make a presentation primarily on the roles and activities of the Beckman Center in Laurens County as well as in the seven (7) other Counties in the region.

Dr. Camilla Bravo, Director of the Laurens County Mental Health said, “Approximately twenty percent (20%) of our adolescent population has a diagnosis of a mental health disorder. One in ten of our American youth has a mental health disorder that affects the family and community. Untreated mental health issues lead to poor education components, school drop-outs, strained relationships and usually has involvement with the child juvenile systems, sexual abuse as well as risky behaviors within a community. A student with a mental health issue always has a high dropout rate. It is estimated that seventy percent (70%) of the students do not have the mental health support that they need. Due to budget cuts, there are just so many of us to go around. Last year, Laurens County Mental Health completed over one thousand (1,000) mental health screenings. This service is free to the community, however, it is not free to complete. Screenings alone cost the average of forty four thousand dollars (\$44,000) a year”.

Continuing, Dr. Bravo said, “This year we started a program of “Youth in Transition”. This program works with seventeen (17) year olds and is used as a transition from a child diagnose to an adult diagnosis. Sessions are six (6) to eight (8) weeks long and focus on life skills and healthy living. As a side note, I would like to say that Greenwood County Council has allocated twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000). I am asking you to find a way to raise the bar”.

Dr. Byron Parker said, “I have been a physician here in Laurens County for well over thirty six (36) years and I just want to say that there is not a private psychiatrist in Laurens County and probably will never be. This profession rarely takes Medicaid for these people that need the help and this leaves funding up to the Mental Health Center”.

Dr. Jerman Disasa said, “I am here speaking as an educator within Laurens County. I ask you to support this program and could be incredibly powerful to this County. I am amazed at how many kids need this type of counseling and support”.

Ms. Amanda Suarez said, “I think all have addressed details of the Beckman Center and all I want to say is that we certainly appreciate your support.”

Chairman Wood said, “I thank you all for coming and informing Council about the Laurens Campus but, presently this Council is looking at a two million dollar (\$2,000,000) deficit during this budget process. In other words, we have less coming in as revenues and we need to justify how we need to approach this this year. The Council is non-committal at this time and will take this as information.”

Dr. Disasa replied, “We are here thanking Council for their involvement and not just for the financial support”.

**LAURENS COUNTY DETENTION CENTER** - Major Tyson, Jail Administrator of the Laurens County Detention Center, addressed Council by saying, “First, I would like to thank Sheriff Ricky Chastain for having faith in the staff of the Detention Center to operate a safe and secure facility for the residents of Laurens County”.

Major Tyson continued by reading a letter of gratitude from him to all involved with the operations of the Detention Center.

Continuing, Major Tyson said, “The Laurens County Detention Center is operating one of the better centers in the State of South Carolina. We are the third facility to receive “Prison Rape Elimination Act” (PREA) Certification. This certification is a federal mandated law that is controlled and administered by The Department

of Justice. PREA certification shows that a Detention Center exemplifies their professional ability to stay updated with the most effective standards in today's correctional facilities across the U.S. It demonstrates that collectively the Sheriff's Office and Detention Center have been evaluated by guidelines and standards set forth by the Federal Government and have passed the test. This includes policies, procedures and investigations to decrease sexual assaults from occurring within the facility and continuing to ensure safety for both deputies and inmates.

**RESOLUTION #2015-10, "EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK"**. – Director Burrell appeared before Council requesting for Council to honor a national movement of Emergency Medical Services Week within Laurens County.

COUNCILMAN JONES made the MOTION to approve with VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

**RESOLUTION#2015-11, "PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL MONTH"** - COUNCILMAN PITTS made the MOTION to approve Resolution #2015-11 with COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

**RESOLUTION #2015-12, "A RESOLUTION BY LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGING THE MERGER OF UNIFOR ALUMINUM FORGINGS, LLC AND UNIFOR BUILDINGS, LLC INTO BRAWO USA, INCORPORATION, FORMERLY KNOWN AS UNIFOR BRASS FORGINGS, INCORPORATED, FORMERLY KNOWN AS UNIFOR BRASS FORGINGS, INCORPORATED"**. County Attorney Cruickshanks stated that this is a Resolution informing and confirming the merger of different aspects of the Industry known as Unifor. Those merging affiliates known as Aluminum Forgings, LLC Unifor Brass Forgings, Incorporated and Unifor Buildings, LLC are now known as BRAWO USA, Incorporated.

VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to approve Resolution #2015-12 with COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

**APPOINTMENT(S), LAURENS COUNTY WATER / SEWER COMMISSION** - Mr. Jeff Field, Executive Director of the Laurens County Water / Sewer Commission approached Council requesting appointment of and the re-appointment of the following individuals.

- 1.) Mrs. Susan Curry  
P.O. Box 351  
Laurens, SC 29360  
Representing Laurens County Council District V  
Term expiring June 30, 2019
- 2.) Mr. William Teague  
P.O. Box 903  
Laurens, SC 29360  
Representing Laurens County Council District IV  
Term expiring June 30, 2019
- 3.) Mr. Wofford Woods  
163 Cooley Road  
Gray Court, SC 29645  
Representing Laurens County Council I  
Term expiring June 30, 2019
- 4.) Mr. Ted Davenport  
105 Pinehurst Drive  
Clinton, SC 29325  
Representing Laurens County  
Municipal District  
Term Expiring June 30, 2017
- 5.) Mr. Philip Odell  
12843 Indian Mound Rd  
Ware Shoals, SC 29692  
Representing Laurens County Council II  
Term expiring June 30, 2017  
(Completing Patrick Jackson's term, who resigned)

VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to approve the appointments as submitted with COUNCILMAN JONES SECONDING: VOTE 6-0.

**FIRST READING, ORDINANCE #786, "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND RESCIND ORDINANCE #347 AND OTHER MATTERS APPERTAINING THERETO"** – County Attorney

Cruikshanks explained, "In 1992 Ordinance #347 was enacted. At that time, the South Carolina Attorney General's Office, through a formal opinion, told Council that it was legal to allow a County to pay employees a certain amount of money in lieu of them opting for the offered County insurance. That has rocked along for some time until in 2013 when an issue came up in another County in South Carolina if this was a legal process. The clause in the South Carolina Constitution says that additional payments to governmental employees is not legally appropriate and therefore has rescinded the opinion of 1992 as this practice must stop. Having worked with the Human Resource Department and a Labor Law Attorney, we have crafted this ordinance for Council approval".

Continuing Attorney Cruikshanks explained "In section A - New Elections...this means that no newly hired employees of the County will be allowed to participate in the cash in lieu of insurance on or after the effective date of this Ordinance. In section B - Current Elections.....meaning those individuals currently electing to take cash in lieu of participating in the group health plan may continue until either the a loss of health insurance coverage qualifies an employee to participate in the County's group health plan during the month of October, or at 11:59 P.M. on December 31, 2015. In section C - County Council Members....means any elected member of County Council shall end on the first of the month following the effective date of this Ordinance".

COUNCILMAN JONES made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #786 upon first reading as presented with COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING for discussion.

Councilman Pitts asked how many employees would be involved with specifically section b of the ordinance? Human Resource Manager, Debi Parker replied that there was a total of thirty five (35) that includes County Council.

Councilman Pitts asked how many of those have insurance by other means. Ms. Parker replied that all have insurance elsewhere.

Councilman Pitts asked how these employees would be notified of these changes. Mrs. Parker replied that letters have been written and will be mailed to each employee.

Councilwoman Anderson stated that she felt that implementing this program should be started sooner than the dates noted in the ordinance and as soon as we have it confirmed with the employees that they do have other insurance, we need to stop it immediately. Attorney Cruikshanks replied that the timeframes noted in the ordinance will allow those employees time to determine their personal needs as it relates to insurance options. Mrs. Parker added that each hired employee has to provide proof of insurance when signing up with the County.

Councilman Pitts asked for confirmation that all employees have to provide proof of insurance. Mrs. Parker agreed.

Chairman Wood stated that this is a process that this Council will have to go through to implement and prepare the employees.

Vice Chairman Tollison asked, "As this ordinance is written, are there any Attorney General requirements to expedite the process? Attorney Cruikshanks replied that there was not and that the only immediate action would be with County Council once approved.

Vice Chairman Tollison stated, "I am certain the talk among the employees will be that this Council is cutting their pay when in reality we are not. Our actions are based on the Attorney General's opinion and is not an action produced by this Council, the Administrative Office nor the Human Resources Office".



Councilman Jones stated, "I am thinking of all of the legalities as well as the financial burdens on the employees. Is there a certain amount of legal time to implement or is it completely up to Council." Attorney Cruickshanks replied that it all falls in the courts of County Council.

COUNCIL VOTED 5-1. Councilwoman Anderson was in opposition from the point of changes needed in part B.

**FIRST READING, ORDINANCE #789, "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND MODIFY LAURENS COUNTY ORDINANCE #625 REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF FEES-IN-LIEU-OF-TAX RECEIVED, RETAINED AND DISTRIBUTED BY LAURENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO ANY JOINT COUNTY INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK AGREEMENTS AND AMEDNMENTS THERTO AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO".** – COUNCILMAN NASH made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #789 with COUNCILMAN JONES SECONDING for discussion purposes.

Vice Chairman Tollison stated, "Since this is to modify the existing Fee-in-lieu-of Agreement, I feel that further discussion of the total amounts to be reestablished needs to be entertained by this Council".

Chairman Wood replied that it involved cutting the present allocation from three hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$360,000) a year to three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) a year.

Vice Chairman Tollison stated that he wished to amend the earlier motion because he felt that using those amounts is reaching deep into their pockets and that this needs to be included during budget discussions. Attorney Cruickshanks stated that an amendment could be made as to the motion on the floor prior to the vote of the earlier motion. Councilman Anderson said that she would like to table this and for it to be included during budget discussions.

As a point of clarification, Vice Chairman Tollison said, "This ordinance needs to move along with the discussions of the county budget. I am not going to amend the motion but I will make the recommendation of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be used instead of the sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) during second reading. We have several thousands of jobs within the community because of the efforts of this organization. I do agree, Mr. Chairman that they do need to reach in their pockets and make cuts just as we are expecting other county departments to do. I will vote on this motion to get it to second reading".

Councilman Jones said, "We do have to make cuts across the board as we are facing a two million dollar (\$2,000,000) deficit. We need to start looking as to where to cut. I would like to say that it is detrimental to the free market and to the people to take more money out of their pockets. I want to revert back to the local option sales tax. From what I read, we are taking two million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$2,800,000) out of our local economy. The people in Greenwood and Spartanburg don't have that tax. We have Laurens County citizens going to those counties to buy products because they are at a cheaper cost than here."

Councilwoman Anderson asked, "Is this not a budget item?" Attorney Cruickshanks replied, "No. It is an amendment to an ordinance that states that the funds will go to the general fund of the County. From that sense it does deal with the budget".

Councilwoman Anderson said, "Every time someone runs for an office, they pledge to get more jobs in the County. This Council has worked with the Development Corporation for a number of years and has prospered. I am happy. There are other counties that are envious of our economic development process because they do not have what we have".

Chairman Wood asked Councilwoman Anderson if she had reviewed the Development Corporation budget. Councilman Anderson replied that she had.



Chairman Wood said, "My justification of doing this because county tax money is reflected in their audits and this is a time where our budgets are being cut by all of our departments. We are losing close to a million dollars (\$1,000,000) a year from the State. We need to ask them to tighten their belt a little bit. We can change it back in a year or so".

Continuing Chairman Wood stated that he would like to note items in their budget....there are three (3) employees in this department and has a budget of five hundred thirty three thousand dollars (\$533,000) for three (3) people. No other department in the County has this much budgeted. No other department in this County pays all medical, dental, health insurance. The LCDC pays their employees one hundred percent (100%) of their insurance. They don't even pay part of it. No other department in this County pays their employee one thousand dollars (\$1,000) a month car allowance. That is twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000) a year for a car allowance just to drive your car to work. I also read that there is ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000) of new FILOTs coming in to the LCDC as far as revenue. Why do they need staff mileage at twenty four hundred dollars (\$2,400) a year when they are paying an employee a thousand dollars (\$1,000) a month and furnishing a car for another to drive. Who gets the staff mileage...the Clerk. Golf Tournaments....it's not my responsibility to pay for a golf tournament. I know they are reimbursed on the golf tournaments but not one hundred percent (100%). Legal expense....they pay this because of duplication. Kitchen supplies...three thousand three hundred dollars (\$3,300) a year. Contract labor...this has not been explained to me yet at twenty thousand five hundred dollars (\$20,500) a year. At every meeting that the LCDC Board has they have a catered meal at four thousand dollars (\$4,000) a year. Site maintenance at Owings Park at ten thousand eight hundred dollars (\$10,800) a year. The only thing there is a driveway where they cut grass. Utilities at Owings Park at six thousand dollars (\$6,000) for a sign. Rent on a building that half of it belongs to this County. The County furnished the money where they built on to the Chamber of Commerce at thirty seven thousand two hundred dollars (\$37,200) a year. Upstate Alliance at thirty five thousand dollars (\$35,000) a year. And Laurens County furnishes all of the fiscal services such as payroll, insurance, fica, medical and retirement. This is why I fell that they have room to cut".

Chairman Wood called for a vote of Council. COUNCIL VOTED 4-2 (Council Members Anderson and Pitts were in opposition).

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT** – Chairman Wood Administrator Segars stated that he did not have any reporting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – Chairman Wood opened the floor for public comment at 6:25 P.M.

- 1.) Ms. Katie Shaw, 4H Club Director, "I wish to thank Council for their support over the years. There are seven (7) clubs within Laurens County and they meet year round".

Having no one else wishing to address Council, Chairman Wood closed the session at 6:29 P.M.

**COUNTY COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

- 1.) Vice Chairman Tollison thanked all that came out to attend the meeting and thanked all of the staff peace Officers and EMS employees for all of their hard work.
- 2.) Councilman Jones echoed his thanks to all the law enforcement and EMS employees and stated that they present a prime example of what can be.
- 3.) Councilwoman Anderson referenced the Local Government Funds being voted on by the Senate Finance Committee as did the House. Councilwoman Anderson encouraged all to call Senator Verdin.



- 4.) Councilman Pitts asked if someone could give an update on the road management issues as it relates to the State. And, he stated that he hoped the department heads will provide comments to Council as we move forward with the budget deliberations.

Replying to the question of roads, Chairman Wood said that he understood that an amendment had been passed so that a County Council can vote on certain matters as to taking on roadways.

Public Works Director, Rob Russian agreed.

- 5.) Chairman Wood referenced the change in County Council Committee assignments and stated that he made these changes so as to have a full Committee if need be before the election was held for County Council District #3.

Councilwoman Anderson asked that the assignments be reconsidered once the seat is filled.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to move into Executive Session at 6:30 P.M. to discuss an employment matter. COUNCILMAN JONES SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

There was a COUNCIL CONSENSUS to reconvene in open session at 6:50 P.M.

Chairman Wood reported that no action was taken on the employment matter.

**ADJOURNMENT** – With no further action required by Council, Chairman Wood adjourned the meeting at 6:55 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Betty C. Walsh", is written over the typed name.

Betty C. Walsh  
Laurens County Clerk to Council